NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND IMF

*274. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH : SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALVIYA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it s a fact that negotiations between the IMF and Government over the proposed massive loan to meet the exceptional financial requirements have come to a standstill because of certain pre-requisites to be fulfilled by Government; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANQE AND MINIS- ' TER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED) : (a) and (b) No Sir. Ind a satisfaciorjly concluded a $ 2.2 billion Upper Credit Tranche Standby Arrangement with the IMF in June 1993. Thereafter, preliminary discussions have been held with the IMF for an Extended Fund Facility Arrangement with a blend of,' ESAF resources. These discussions have also been inter-woven with the Article IV, Consultations. The discussion on the aforesaid will be continued further in the light of review of the country's balance of payments situation 'ncluding the need for exceptional financiisg.

FAILURE OF LOCAL RADIO CONCEPT

*275. SHRI DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY ; Will the Minster of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to slate :

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the "local radio concept" is a failure as frequency modulation (FM) bands are not avalable in the old radios and new raidos having FM band are not in the reach of common man due to high cost; and

(b) if so, what steps Government pro pose to take to make it a success ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) : (a) No, Sir. Local radio concept with F.M. band is net a failure. Due to saturation of channels available on MedIum Wave band, there is now little scope of further expansion in this field. Moreover, F.M. band has inherent advantages of better quality, uniformity of reception, both during day and night, and noise free quality of listening. Good quality F.M. receivers are now available in the market at reasonably low cost, which would further come down in future, with increasing demand, and compet'tion among industries.

(b) Question does not arise.

POSTAL FACILITIES IN VILLAGES

*276. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA :

SHRI ANANl RAM JAISWAL :

will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) what, according to the recent assess-ment, it any, made by Government, is the total number of villages in the country which are lacking postal facilities (State-wise):

(b) what is the number of villages which have been provided with postal facilities during 1992 and 1993 (till date) as against the target stating the reasons for the shortfall, if, any, in the targets;

(c) whether any t me bound programme to provide postal facilities in the villages has been formulated by Government; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) A statement (I) indicating Statewise number of villages not having post offices is placed on the Table of the House. (See below)

(b) A statement (II) is laid on the Table of the House. There was no shortfall in achieving the target last year. (See below)